UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.96/825/Part V/7
9 August 1994

Original: ENGLISH

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Forty-fifth session

UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART V. SOUTH WEST ASIA NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Section 7 - Iraq

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-03043

V.7 IRAQ

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population

1. At December 1993, Iraq hosted a refugee population which was composed of 24,436 Iranians of Kurdish origin, 20,000 Iranians of Arab origin, 100 Iranians of Persian origin, 62,500 Palestinians, 599 Eritreans and 587 persons of other nationalities. The breakdown was as follows:

Country of Origin	Number 31/12/92	Number 31/12/93	Location	Type of Assistance
Iran (Kurds)	20,000	20,690	Al-Tash Al-Anbar Government (Central Iraq)	- Care and maintenance - Resettlement - Repatriation
Iran (Arabs)	9,900	19,900	Missan, Wasit Governorates (Central Iraq)	- Care and maintenance - Repatriation
Iran (Kurds)	3,800	3,750	Sul & Erbil Governorates	- Care and maintenance - Repatriation
Iran (Persian)	100	100	Ramadi	- Care and maintenance
Palestinians	60,000	62,500	Baghdad	- Care and maintenance - Repatriation - Resettlement
Eritreans	600	600	Baghdad	- Care and maintenance - Repatriation
Others	600	590	Baghdad	- Care and maintenance - Repatriation - Resettlement
Total	95,000	108,130		

2. The above figures are estimates since the Government of Iraq has yet to authorize UNHCR to conduct a registration of the refugee caseload.

3. The 20,690 Iranian refugees of Kurdish origin residing in Al-Tash camp comprise 2,730 children under 4 years old, 6,440 children between 4 and 18 years of age, and 11,520 adults aged 18 and above.

4. In addition to the above caseload, Iraq has hosted some 6,000 stateless persons who were expelled from Kuwait in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

5. As returns from neighbouring countries, mainly from the Islamic Republic of Iran gathered momentum, a special programme was designed in the last quarter of 1993 to facilitate the return of the refugees and their economic reintegration in Northern Iraq.

6. At the end of April 1994, some 4,000 Turkish nationals of Kurdish origin arrived in Northern Iraq fleeing fighting in their areas of residence. They have been provided with food donated by WFP and relief items from existing stocks.

Programme objectives and priorities

7. The Office of the Chief of Mission in Iraq has established the following country programme objectives for 1994 and 1995:

Iranian refugees of Kurdish origin

8. Local integration is not an option for this caseload since they have no access to legal employment and their freedom of movement is restricted. A limited number of them are expected to be accepted for resettlement in third countries. Efforts will therefore continue to reach an agreement between the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq for the resumption of the repatriation movement from Al-Tash camp, which was halted in early 1992. Meanwhile, Al-Tash residents will continue to receive food assistance provided by WFP, and benefit from UNHCR assistance in the field of health care, shelter, education, vocational training and counselling. Emphasis will be placed on the provision of social services to promote community involvement, particularly of women, in different sectors.

Iranian refugees of Arab origin

9. The majority of persons in this group have settled locally, to the extent that they have access to land and a certain degree of freedom of movement. Assistance is provided through the Government to improve their medical care and sanitation conditions, which are seriously affected by the general difficult economic situation as a result of the war in the Persian Gulf. Limited food aid is provided by WFP. No resettlement is foreseen for this caseload, but efforts will be made to obtain an agreement between the Governments of Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran for their possible repatriation.

Iranian refugees of Persian origin

10. Refugees are registered and processed for resettlement. Assistance, which is provided on an individual basis, will continue to focus on counselling, food assistance and health care.

Palestinian refugees

11. The Palestinian population in Iraq is composed of the 1948 and the 1967 caseloads together with some 2,500 refugees who were expelled from Kuwait in the aftermath of the Iraq-Kuwait conflict. Assistance is targeted at the most vulnerable people within each group and will focus on the provision of food and limited health assistance. The UNHCR office in Baghdad also collaborates with the United Nation Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on matters related to the documentation and return of individual cases to Gaza.

Eritrean refugees and other nationalities

12. Transport and material assistance will continue to be provided on a case-by-case basis, pending their voluntary return to their respective countries of origin.

Resettlement

13. The objective of the UNHCR office in Baghdad is to ensure that the files of over 600 cases (equivalent to 3,000 persons), mostly Iranian refugees, will have been processed by the end of 1995.

Returnee Programme

14. Some 8,300 Iraqis who returned from the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1993 and the first quarter of 1994 will be assisted with reintegration. In addition, some 10,000 Iraqi refugees who are expected to return in the course of 1994 will receive food assistance, transport, shelter and a repatriation package to facilitate their reintegration. Altogether, it is estimated that up to 70,000 individuals might return in 1994-1995 from various countries in the region, including the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

15. The status quo will be maintained with only one office in Baghdad, and missions undertaken to the north of the country. There will, however, be a continuous presence of a Senior Field Officer, an assistant and a driver in the northern areas. To further strengthen UNHCR presence in the north in view of returnee movements and to respond to the recent influx of Turkish Kurds, a consultant is expected to be hired for up to nine months.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

16. In the central and southern Governorates, where no foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are present, the Office of the Chief of Mission in Baghdad will implement all planned activities directly. The Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the Ministry of Health will contribute by providing human resources in the area of primary health care. In the northern Governorates, Shelter Now International (SNI) is designated as UNHCR's implementing partner in assisting returnees. SNI is expected to assist some 10,000 returnees in 1994 and is also responsible for the distribution of food commodities and other domestic items to 3,746 refugees in Northern Iraq.

17. Some 3,500 metric tons of basic food commodities are to be mobilized in 1994 through WFP. In the central and southern Governorates, food is distributed within the framework of the WFP-United Nations Humanitarian Programme. It is expected that in 1995 food requirements will be reduced slightly, given the anticipated voluntary repatriation as well as resettlement.

General Programmes

(a) Variation in planned activities in 1993

18. A staffing shortage at the UNHCR office in Baghdad, combined with the absence of an implementing partner, led to some delays in the execution of planned activities. The UNHCR project covered transport/logistics, domestic needs, water and sanitation, shelter, health, education, and vocational training. Serious shortcomings were experienced in the supply of food by WFP, with 210 metric tons being supplied against the requirements of 2,500 metric tons for a total of 25,100 beneficiaries.

19. In the absence of a Resettlement Officer, who was only recruited in October 1993, only 323 persons were resettled while another 93 cases were being processed, as compared to a planning figure of 700 resettlement places.

20. Despite substantial efforts made by the UNHCR Offices in Tehran and Baghdad as well as by Headquarters to create conditions conducive to the resumption of the voluntary repatriation of Iranian Kurds, no agreement could be reached between the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq. Consequently, the number of repatriations was limited to eleven African refugees.

(b) 1994 planned implementation

21. Care and maintenance assistance in the form of medical care (including the supply of medicines), water and sanitation, and education continues to be provided to 24,436 Iranian Kurdish refugees in both Al Tash camp and in Northern Iraq, pending their repatriation. Efforts are underway to improve community participation in camp activities through self-help programmes such as garbage collection, opening of drainage ditches, as well as assistance for the establishment of small businesses that provide basic services to the community. Other activities undertaken are designed especially for women, such as vocational training courses and grants to start small businesses, and also for children and handicapped individuals.

22. Basic food assistance is provided by WFP, while UNHCR supplies complementary food to children under five years of age. The number of beneficiaries has been increased to 40,000 to include Iranian Arabs in Wasit and Misan, following the poor yield of crops in 1993 due to rat infestation. The daily ration consists of 300 g of flour, 30 g of pulses, 30 g of oil and 10 g of sugar.

23. Resettlement activities are also proceeding. It is expected that some 2,000 individuals will be resettled in 1994. Assistance will include transportation from the refugees' places of residence to Amman and transit expenses, including food and accommodation, and emergency medical care, as required. Transportation costs from Amman onwards are met by the receiving countries.

24. Pending an agreement between the Iraqi and Iranian Governments, repatriation continues mainly for refugees of African origin, of whom 200 are expected to return to their countries of origin.

(c) 1995 programme proposals

Care and Maintenance

25. The proposed allocation for 1995 is the same as in the 1994 approved budget. The same range of activities will continue and no major changes in numbers or assistance parameters are expected until an agreement is reached on the repatriation of Iranian Kurdish refugees.

Voluntary Repatriation

26. Some 7,500 Iranian refugees are expected to repatriate in 1995, provided an agreement is reached between the two Governments concerned. Following this, funding for transportation and a repatriation grant will be sought from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation. In addition, 200 African refugees, mainly Eritreans, Somalis and Sudanese, are expected to return to their respective countries of origin.

Resettlement

27. Although the number of beneficiaries is expected to be the same (2,000 persons), the proposed budget for 1995 is higher to take account of an increase in travel costs.

Special Programmes

(a) Variations in planned activities in 1993

28. The unforeseen late arrival of a higher than expected number of returnees prevented the full implementation of the assistance project for returnees to Northern Iraq. Thus, refugees received transport and basic food (donated by WFP) only. Delivery of shelter materials and assistance packages had to be delayed until the spring of 1994, when weather conditions improved.

(b) 1994 planned implementation

29. Some 10,000 Iraqi refugees are expected to return in the course of 1994 from neighbouring countries, mainly from the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, an appropriation has been made for up to 50,000 returnees, which was the original planning figure. They will receive the same assistance as was planned for those who returned in 1993, i.e. transport, food, shelter materials, and an assistance package to foster their self-reliance. Some roads will be rehabilitated to allow the returnees to reach their places of origin or residence.

(c) 1995 programme proposals

30. It is assumed that some 20,000 Iraqi refugees will return in 1995, and they will receive the same assistance as returnees in 1993 and 1994.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) Variations in planned activities in 1993

31. A Field Officer was recruited on a short-term basis for over three months, under temporary assistance, in order to deal with the returnee influx, as well as with protection issues related to the status of Iraqi refugees deported from Turkey. Furthermore, a local social worker was recruited on a short-term basis, also under temporary assistance, in order to deal with individual cases and coordinate community activities at Al-Tash camp. As a result of these appointments, as well as the use of a budget factor that was low for the country requirements, costs under salaries and common staff costs were higher than expected.

(b) 1994 planned implementation

32. Changes in staffing levels consisted of one international post of Senior Logistics Assistant and one local post of Senior Social Services Assistant being approved under General Programmes, effective 1 July 1994. In view of the expected number of returnees in Northern Iraq, additional short-term staff will be employed under temporary assistance, including one Field Officer for a period of at least six months.

33. In view of the above, the total revised 1994 requirements are higher than the initial estimates, particularly with regard to salaries and common staff costs, the latter having been budgeted at a higher rate to take account of actual requirements. Non-staff costs related to local and regional travel are also higher than expected given the frequent missions being undertaken to Northern Iraq by UNHCR staff from Baghdad. Costs under general operating expenses and office supplies are lower than the initial estimates as a result of the actual phasing out of requirments previously included in the Plan of Action for the Gulf Crisis.

(c) 1995 initial estimates

34. In terms of staffing, one Field Assistant post will be discontinued as of 31 December 1994. Salaries and common staff costs cover the continuation until 31 December 1995 of all previously approved time-limited posts. Costs under these budget chapters remain approximately at 1994 levels.

35. The total initial 1995 estimate is however slightly lower than the 1994 revised requirement. Non-staff costs with respect to overtime payments and local and regional travel are expected to be higher due to the limited number of staff and given the workload anticipated for the returnee programme in Northern Iraq, while general operating expenses are lower due to a 17 per cent reduction in rental costs for the office premises in 1994. Provision has also been made for the replacement of data processing equipment and for joint United Nations activities, particularly related to the sharing of costs for security related matters.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN IRAQ

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
1,473.5	1,789.3	350.0	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	350.3
142.0	284.5	284.5	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	50.0
59.0 a/	117.7	117.4	RESETTLEMENT	167.3
–	–	1,156.2	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	1,279.5
1,674.5	2,191.5	1,908.1	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	1,847.1
–	–	427.4	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	548.1
1,674.5	2,191.5	2,335.5	T O T A L (1)	2,395.2
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
1,419.4	473.6	–	PLAN OF ACTION RELATING TO THE GULF CRISIS	–
511.9	–	4,300.0	OTHER TRUST FUNDS	1887.4
–	–	694.0	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	405.2
1,931.3	473.6	4,994.0	T O T A L (2)	2,292.6
3,605.8	2,665.1	7,329.5	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	4,687.8

a/ obligation incurred against Overall Allocation